

**Law Enforcement Division**  
**Bi-Weekly Field Report**  
**1/7/13 – 1/20/13**

**DISTRICT 1**

CO Dave Painter is assisting the local Wisconsin warden with an ongoing investigation involving a deer poaching ring along the Wisconsin border. Multiple deer and suspects have been uncovered and the investigation is ongoing.

CO Grant Emery responded to the scene of a snowmobile that sank on Lake Gogebic. A 20 foot wide pressure crack opened up and one snowmobile was lost in 12 feet of water. The snowmobile was recovered later that day.

CO Mark Leadman observed a vehicle operating too fast for road conditions on a remote fishing access site road. After passing the vehicle, CO Leadman observed fresh footprints in the newly fallen snow. The footprints left the road and led to a sign post that was suspiciously missing the fishing access site sign. CO Leadman was able to track the vehicle down after not having a visual for over 20 minutes. A confession was obtained by one of the vehicle occupants for stealing the sign. The access sight sign was also recovered. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Mark Leadman contacted a group of anglers who were in the process of using illegal drugs in an ice shanty on an inland lake. CO Leadman seized the illegal substance. Enforcement action was taken.

**DISTRICT 2**

CO Mike Hammill was on routine fish patrol when he encountered a subject fishing with too many lines and in possession of an illegal bass. The subject was six lines over the legal limit. A ticket was issued for too many lines and a warning given for the illegal fish.

CO Kyle Publiski was at a local taxidermist when he observed a nice 10 point buck. While admiring the 10 point he noticed that the deer tag indicated that the deer was shot on the 27<sup>th</sup>. Further investigation revealed that the tag was purchased after legal hunting hours on the same day that it was shot. The CO began an investigation into the suspicious deer and was able to get a full confession that the subject was hunting without a license and only buys a kill tag if a deer is harvested. The 10 point was seized and arrest warrants have been sought and approved. Restitution for the deer is being sought in the case.

CO Kyle Publiski responded to a complaint of illegal traps being set on private property. Upon arriving on location the CO found an illegal 330 conibear trap and illegally set snares. After several days a suspect was identified and ticket was issued for the illegal traps.

CO Robert Crisp checked an inland lake where there were several anglers using tip-ups as well as jigging rods. At one point, a subject noticed CO Crisp watching from shore and quickly reeled up his line and dropped the rod on the ice. CO Crisp then moved his patrol truck a short distance away and returned to where the anglers' vehicles were parked. He watched and listened from nearby. The angler he saw drop the pole stated to a friend that he was surprised the CO didn't see him with his fishing line. Just before the group was about to leave the parking area, CO Crisp contacted the suspect and was able to get the angler to bring up the part about trying to hide his fishing line. The reason was that he had not purchased a fishing license. A ticket was issued.

### **DISTRICT 3**

An investigation into an unlicensed taxidermist led to Conservation Officer Mark DePew and five other District 3 officers serving a search warrant on an Otsego County man. Officers found evidence of the unlicensed taxidermy business along with other illegally harvested animals, which officers are following up on. Conservation Officer Kelly Ross received a confession from one hunter who shot a 12 point buck and had his wife buy a tag so he could continue hunting.

COs John Sklba and Bill Webster received a complaint of a deer that had gotten stuck in the slush ice in Lake Huron. The COs put on their waders and went into the frigid waist deep water. They were able to circle around the deer and move it in the right direction, and ultimately had to drag the deer onto the shore.

CO Kelly Ross arrested an individual on a warrant for hunter harassment during the firearm deer season.

CO Eric Bottorff investigated an elk kill site in which it appears the bull elk was shot and wounded during the December elk hunt and never recovered. The investigation continues.

COs Andrea Erratt and Andrea Albert patrolled the Jordan Valley snowmobile trails and encountered several snowmobilers who failed to purchase trail permits. Tickets were issued. One rental sled didn't have a trail permit and the rental agency/owner was ticketed for the violation.

CO Andrea Erratt is following up on subjects who had multiple deer license purchases in 2012. So far, most have been found to be legitimate mistakes, but one subject lost his licenses before the season and then shot a buck and failed to tag it. He then bought another license. When contacted, the buck still hadn't been tagged. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Jon Sklba took down names and addresses of ice shanties on Grand Lake during the January thaw last week, which proved to be very beneficial, as two shanties went through the ice later in the week. The owners have been contacted and given some time to get the shanties out.

CO Carl VanderWall responded to a complaint of a pile of deer carcasses dumped on the side of a county road. The investigation led to multiple subjects being charged with loaning and borrowing deer kill tags, littering, and giving a false statement to an officer.

#### **DISTRICT 4**

CO Holly Pennoni responded to a complaint of subjects catching and keeping undersized northern pike on a Wexford County lake. CO Pennoni contacted the suspects and located two undersized pike. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Angela Greenway was patrolling in rural Lake County when she encountered a vehicle stopped in the roadway. Upon contacting the occupants, she learned that they were coyote hunting with hounds. Further investigation revealed that the two occupants possessed two partially uncased firearms in the vehicle, one of which was loaded. Tickets were issued for the safety violations.

CO Steve Converse was patrolling by a residence when he observed deer parts in the yard. After stopping to check on the source of the parts, he discovered that the owner of the residence had taken the deer prior to having purchased a license. The subject was charged for taking a deer without a license.

#### **DISTRICT 5**

CO Mike Hearn patrolled snowmobiles in Kalkaska County and found numerous violations for careless operation, unregistered snowmobiles, and riding against the flow of traffic.

CO Mike Hearn was patrolling state land and found a snare set and fresh signs of the snare being checked. Officer Hearn walked the area and located four foothold traps with only one having a tag. CO Hearn followed up with the name on the tag and the subject admitted to setting the traps and snare. Enforcement action was taken.

Area 5-1 conducted patrols during the first weekend of Tip-Up Town in Houghton Lake. Numerous violations were encountered for unregistered snowmobiles, no trail permits, no helmets, careless operation, and fishing with too many lines. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Warren MacNeill was the first on scene of a rollover accident. The female driver was still in the car upon his arrival. Officer MacNeill helped Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel extricate her from the car and load her into the ambulance.

CO Jason McCullough finished an investigation of a trapper not checking his traps on a daily basis. The investigation started with a complaint of a raccoon that had been in a trap for three days and concluded with a confession from the suspect and a ticket being issued.

## **DISTRICT 6**

CO Nick Atkin received a complaint of a litter pile on state land. The CO investigated and found items leading to a suspect. The suspect was interviewed and the origin of the litter was located. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Nick Atkin was on patrol when he contacted a small game hunter in possession of a rabbit he had just harvested. When the CO asked to see his hunting license, the hunter was unable to produce it, and after a short investigation, CO Atkin determined the subject hadn't purchased one. Enforcement action was taken.

COs Seth Rhodea and Josh Wright contacted anglers in the Quanicassee area coming off of Saginaw Bay from ice fishing. Several subjects had no fishing licenses and enforcement action was taken.

CO Seth Rhodea responded to assist a MSP trooper who had a felon flee from him in a vehicle. During the chase, the subject drove into the Minden State Game Area (SGA), through a locked gate and eventually into the woods on an old foot path. CO Rhodea followed the subject's tracks back to his vehicle where it was found abandoned. A perimeter was set up around the game area and eventually a MSP helicopter assisted in the search; however, the subject appeared to make it out of the game area and is still at large.

CO Bob Hobkirk received a complaint from an individual who was concerned that a hunter was hunting rabbits within his safety zone. The home owner wanted the hunter to be charged with the violation. When CO Hobkirk contacted the hunters, it was apparent that one of them had been hunting very close to the complainant's residence. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Quincy Gowenlock had a bench trial with a defendant who shot an eight point buck from a vehicle last November while using a spotlight. Numerous other game laws were also violated. When the defendant arrived at the courthouse, he had a change of heart and pled guilty. The prosecutor dropped seven additional charges and let the defendant plea to just the illegal deer. During the sentencing the judge gave him 10 days in jail and a \$500 fine. The subject then stated he was planning on moving out of the state. The judge then suspended his jail sentence and gave him 45 days to leave the state of Michigan and to show proof of moving. If he failed to show proof he would be doing the time.

Sgt. Ron Kimmerly was checking walleye anglers as they were pulling their boats off the ice ledge on the Saginaw River. The Sgt. approached one of the anglers and asked if he'd caught any fish. The angler said not a single fish. When Sgt. Kimmerly advised he was going to search the boat, the angler then stated he'd caught one, and reached into the live well and handed the Sgt. an undersized walleye. The angler said when he measured it he thought it was 15 inches. The Sgt. then asked if there were any more walleye in the boat. The angler again said no. The Sgt. again said he was going to

check the boat. The angler again reached into the live well and said, well, there is one more walleye and it's the same size as the other one. The Sgt. then searched the boat and no additional walleye were found. When asked for his fishing license, the angler couldn't find it, but swore that he bought one. After checking the license system, it was found that he hadn't purchased a fishing license in 2012. Tickets were issued.

## **DISTRICT 7**

COs Andy Bauer and Steve Mooney were on marine patrol on the St. Joseph River checking boating and angling activity, when they received a complaint from a MSP trooper about a deer at a residence. COs Bauer and Mooney were able to respond to the location by boat, as the location was next to the river. Investigation led to the discovery of a road killed deer possessed without a permit and deer hunting licenses purchased by an individual who had not met hunter safety requirements before purchasing the license. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Jeff Robinette obtained a four count warrant for a subject who was repeatedly harassing a lawful hunter during the firearm deer season. At one point during the investigation of the complaint, CO Robinette accompanied the hunter to his stand and observed the suspect trespass onto the property and harass the hunter. Three counts of hunter harassment and one count of criminal trespass were authorized by the prosecutor.

CO Mike McGee was on patrol when he observed a large cloud of black smoke in the distance. CO McGee followed the smoke to three men who were burning a fiberglass boat. CO McGee issued the subject who was burning the boat a ticket for the illegal burning.

CO Mike Mshar contacted two juveniles who were trapping with untagged traps. The CO instructed them on how to properly tag their traps, reviewed other laws and met with their grandmother to advise her of the rules as well. A positive learning experience was had by all.

CO Gary Raak located a very large ORV driving over gates, small trees and through wetlands on state land. Enforcement action was taken.

## **DISTRICT 8**

CO Derek Miller investigated a litter violation where a large amount of household trash was found on private land while working another complaint. Some pill bottles and old mail sent him to an address in Washtenaw County where he learned that a caretaker to the owner of the pill bottles dumped the debris. A ticket was issued for litter.

CO Derek Miller contacted ice anglers on an inland lake and came across two anglers with five lines. Only one subject had a fishing license and the other subject stated he wasn't fishing. The owner of the fishing gear said that he was just showing the

unlicensed angler how to fish. CO Miller advised that the subject was using too many lines and that he was limited to only three lines. After a short discussion and more information gained, enforcement action was taken.

CO Derek Miller checked two subjects fishing in a shanty. He announced his presence and the subjects took a while to open the shack and wanted to talk through the portable shanty. CO Miller convinced them to open the door and immediately smelled marijuana. Only one subject was able to produce a fishing license. During the contact CO Miller was unable to locate any marijuana but the subjects admitted to smoking a small amount earlier. One subject was issued a ticket for a fishing violation. The other subject had a state wide warrant for his arrest and another warrant for possession of stolen property. That subject was transported to the county jail.

CO Kyle Bader received four different Report-All Poaching (RAP) complaints for the same small cove on Rose Lake of people taking overlimits and double tripping (returning to catch another limit). CO Bader checked the cove and there were several anglers who all had near their limit of panfish. CO Bader set up on a ridge across the lake with his spotting scope and watched and took notes on all 10 anglers that showed up and when they left. Less than an hour after they left, a pair of anglers came back to the same holes they drilled earlier. CO Bader watched them catch fish for a bit, then drove to their residences. One angler had 48 bluegill and the other had 56. They said they thought the 25 limit was per trip so they took their fish off the ice and came back. Enforcement action was taken. As he was going out to check them on the ice, multiple residents pointed them out to him and said the two are there twice each day.

COs Daniel Prince and Jeff Walker conducted a waterfowl patrol on the late season goose opener. The COs contacted three field hunters and only two of the hunters had shotguns. While checking the hunters shotgun shells the COs observed a full box of 20 gauge shells. The third hunter stated that they were hers and stated the shotgun was under the layout blind they were using. The hunter had no licenses and the shotgun was unplugged. The hunter was ticketed for the violations.

Pete Purdy assisted the MSP with apprehending a subject wanted on a felony embezzlement warrant. The officers went to the subject's house and were advised he wasn't home. Shortly after they were advised the subject saw the patrol vehicles at his residence and was driving around until the police were gone. The officers searched the area and CO Purdy located the subject at a gas station pumping gas. He was taken into custody without incident.

CO Shane Webster met with a subject from Indiana to follow up on an illegally taken deer. A confession was obtained from the subject for hunting the opening day of firearm season and taking an eight point buck. The subject confessed to not purchasing a license and after killing the deer, having his mother purchase a senior resident license to put on the deer. Charges are pending through the prosecutor's office.

CO Todd Thorn and an Ingham County animal control officer responded to a RAP complaint of a deer that had been hanging in a yard since the middle of November. When they arrived at the residence, an untagged antlerless deer was found lying on the ground under a tree beside a house. The man living at the residence, as well as his son, were questioned. They admitted to having shot the deer on November 17th and leaving it in the yard without ever putting a tag on it. The deer was gutted, but the meat was wasted. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Todd Thorn checked an ice angler coming off of the ice and found he had 14 panfish in a bucket that he was taking to his truck. When the man was asked about the other 15 panfish lying in the bed of his pickup truck he paused and then said that they were from earlier in the day when he and his roommate were out fishing. The fish in the truck bed were inspected and although the temps had been at or below freezing all day, the fish were still pliable. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Daniel Prince conducted ice fishing patrols on local lakes in Livingston County. While observing anglers on Lake Chemung, CO Prince observed one subject fishing with five hand lines. The angler tried to discreetly reel in the lines when he noticed CO Prince approaching. When contacted, he only had one line in the water. The angler stated that he was fishing with five lines to locate the fish. He was ticketed for the violation.

## **DISTRICT 9**

COs Kris Kiel and Todd Szyska received a RAP complaint of ice anglers taking overlimits of panfish in St. Clair Shores. The COs checked anglers at a local marina and found two subjects carrying heavy buckets. Upon inspection, one subject had 13 panfish over the limit and the other subject had 23 panfish over the limit. Tickets were issued and restitution will be sought.

CO Ken Kovach received an anonymous complaint of a subject who shot several deer on January 1<sup>st</sup>, including a buck. The CO searched the general area of the complaint and found foot tracks in the snow that led to a hunting blind. There were several deer tracks all around the area and the CO was able to find a faint blood trail. CO Kovach followed the blood trail for several hundred yards onto the adjoining property, where he then found drag marks. The CO contacted several neighbors and developed a possible suspect. CO Kovach contacted the suspect and during a lengthy interview the suspect admitted to shooting a three point buck with a muzzleloader. The CO will be seeking a warrant.

COs Linda Scheidler and Al Schwiderson have been working a complaint in Genesee County where a subject shot a deer in early January with a crossbow. The COs have been taking turns conducting surveillance on the property in an attempt to catch the subject at home. Persistence paid off. When CO Schwiderson found the subject at the residence and questioned him, he admitted to taking the deer out of season. A warrant will be sought for the violations.

CO Mark Ennett was patrolling sections of land near the Dundee Pheasant Farm when he observed a vehicle parked nearby. This land has been the source of ongoing trespass complaints from other landowners. CO Ennett located and checked a small game hunter who gave several reasons why he was hunting that property. CO Ennett contacted the landowner who described a hunter with a similar vehicle as this subject who had been run off the same land a week earlier. CO Ennett ticketed the hunter for recreational trespass.

COs Ben Shively, Kris Kiel, and Mike Drexler conducted an inspection on a taxidermy shop in Oakland County. The inspection led to an illegally taken bear, a subject taking an overlimit of antlered deer, an otter that had been taken during the closed season and not sealed, three fawn hides with no scientific collection permits, and two cases of using/lending kill tag of another. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) was contacted and responded to the taxidermy shop after the COs located a full bald eagle, three bald eagle heads and parts, a great horned owl, a red tail hawk, and a sandhill crane. The COs located approximately 100 specimens that were not tagged. Tickets were issued to the taxidermy shop for failing to keep accurate records, failing to tag specimens with specimen ID tags, and possession of a road killed fawn. Evidence was seized by the COs and USFWS agents. The COs have been conducting interviews and obtaining confessions, and warrants will be sought on the illegally taken game. The USFWS agents will be investigating the protected species.

CO Ben Shively contacted a man and woman who had just set up six tips near an access site in Oakland County. When asked for their fishing licenses the woman stated that she was not fishing and the man stated that his license must be in his other wallet. CO Shively asked if all of the tip ups had his name and address on them. He stated that three did and the others did not because he just bought them. A check of the license system showed that the man did not have a 2012 fishing license. The subject was ticketed for fishing without a license and fish with more than three lines, and was given a warning for failing to have his name and address on his tip ups.